

ROTHERHAM IMPROVEMENT BOARD

Venue: Town Hall, The Crofts,
Moorgate Street,
Rotherham. S60 2TH

Date: Friday, 7th November, 2014

Time: 1.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. Introductions and Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Improvement Board held on 26th September, 2014 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 5)
3. Update on Appointments.
4. Update on External Inspections:- (Pages 6 - 7)
 - OFSTED.
 - CGI.
 - South Yorkshire Police (recommendations herewith)
Access to the full report via -
<http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic/media/south-yorkshire-police-response-to-child-sexual-exploitation.pdf>
5. Expected Shape of an Improvement Plan. (Pages 8 - 16)
6. Financial Planning Process.
7. Dates and Times of the Next and Future Meetings:-
 - Friday, 28th November, 2014
 - Friday, 9th January, 2014
 - Friday, 6th February, 2014
 - Friday, 6th March, 2014

ROTHERHAM IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Friday, 26th September, 2014

Present:-

Mr. R. Vincent, Independent Chairman
Ms. E Grant, National Children's Improvement Adviser, Local Government Association
Councillor E. Hoddinott, Deputy Leader
Councillor P. Lakin, Leader of the Council
Councillor C. Middleton, Conservative Group Representative, Rotherham
Councillor P. Reeve, Local Government Association Independent Group – UKIP
Mr. D. Skinner, Local Government Association

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Ms. C. Downs, Chief Executive, Local Government Association
Councillor S. Houghton, Local Government Association Member Peer
Councillor C. Vines, UKIP Group Leader, Rotherham

C1 INTRODUCTIONS

Rob Vincent, Chairman of Rotherham's Improvement Board, welcomed everyone to this first meeting and explained its purpose which would provide oversight, support where needed, and challenge where appropriate following the publication of the Professor Alexis Jay report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham.

C2 CONTEXT FOR THE WORK OF THE IMPROVEMENT BOARD

Consideration was given to the context of the work of the Improvement Board.

The recommendations on Professor Jay's report were focussed on CSE and Child protection matters. The Board also noted the recommendations of earlier reviews and inspections, which had been summarised by professor Jay. It was important to read the report in full, so that the balance of the findings could be appreciated.

Rotherham currently undergoing an inspection by Ofsted looking specifically at children's safeguarding .

Rotherham was also one of eight Local Authorities selected to undergo a thematic inspection of child sexual exploitation. No judgement would be made in this inspection and the findings (both from Rotherham and the other seven authorities being inspected) would be published in a composite report later this year. The Council was informed that this would not identify individual authorities, but instead look at common themes and

areas of good practice.

In addition, a Government appointed independent inspection was to take place headed up by Louise Casey CB, which the Secretary of State had indicated would review current governance arrangements and how the Council could improve the delivery of services to children and young people, taxi licensing, examine how the Council works with other providers and can improve care. It will also look at the capacity of the Council to address the issues identified by the Jay report. The Leader and Deputy Leader had already met Louise Casey who would be in Rotherham from the 30 September, 2014 and is due to report back on the 29th November, 2014.

The Board requested that copies of the Terms of Reference for these inspections be provided with detail as to how they were being managed along with a copy of Louise Casey's report, once this had been published.

Reviews commissioned into the practices of South Yorkshire Police may also have some implications for the Council. The Board needed to be aware of the terms of reference for these reviews, and of their findings in due course

The Board acknowledged that the restoration of public confidence was an important issue, especially as the focus of Rotherham had been on the Council which had already resulted in the resignation of a number of officers and Elected Members. Whilst there were some wider national attentions on child sexual exploitation any recommendations developed nationally needed to be included at this stage for the Board's consideration.

Resolved:- That the context and work of the Improvement Board be noted and that the relevant Terms of Reference for the various inspections be received.

C3 ROLE OF THE IMPROVEMENT BOARD AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council's Legal Adviser, Jacqueline Collins, introduced the proposed terms of reference and governance arrangements for the Improvement Board, which would provide the oversight, support and challenge to the Council's improvement and transformational journey.

The Board in considering the document submitted suggested that the description on the terms of reference be amended to now read "The Improvement Board is jointly established by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Local Government Association .." and that No. 5 as part of the Board's role include the words "and to receive regular reports on progress." at the end.

Resolved:- That the revised terms of reference and governance arrangements be approved.

C4 STYLE AND APPROACH ISSUES, INCLUDING FREQUENCY AND STYLE OF MEETINGS

The Board considered the style and approach for its meetings.

There should be periodic formal reporting to Council via Cabinet, to ensure transparency as much as possible with some consideration to a short report being submitted to Council to report on the Board's progress to enable Elected Members to ask questions about the process.

It was envisaged that the Board would meet on a monthly basis initially over the next twelve months and whilst the Board was not a formal decision-making body of the Council, it was recommended that it complied with the access to information requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 with the regard to the entitlement of the public to attend the formal meetings and have access to documents.

The suggestion of having a full day session with an opportunity in the morning to undertake activity or workshops associated with key issues for the Board's discussion followed by a formal update for the public meeting in the afternoon, was supported.

It was agreed that any media statements from the Board should be managed jointly by Rotherham's Press Office and the Local Government Association Media Team. For all future meetings a representative from the Press Office should be invited to manage the appropriate communications with the Chairman and the Local Government Association. Board members present agreed to refer any media contacts to the Rotherham Press Office.

In terms of any relevance to overview and scrutiny it was suggested that the minutes of the Improvement Board be circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for information.

The style and approach to the meetings of the Board would need to take account of the other reviews commissioned by South Yorkshire Police and Rotherham's Local Safeguarding Board and early connections were important.

Resolved:- (1) That arrangements be made to facilitate full day sessions for the Improvement Board, with the public meeting in the afternoon, in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972.

(2) That a representative of the Press and Communications Team be invited to attend all forthcoming meetings.

(3) That short reports of Improvement Board meetings be provided to Full Council.

(4) That periodic fuller progress reports be submitted for Cabinet discussion, and then taken to Full Council

(5) That minutes of the Improvement Board be included on the agendas for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for information only.

(6) That media statements be managed through the Rotherham Press Office.

C5 REQUIREMENTS TO ALLOW THE IMPROVEMENT BOARD TO BE EFFECTIVE

The Chairman of the Board urged the Council to develop its draft Improvement Plan as soon as possible.

The Improvement Plan should be constituted jointly with the Local Government Association who offered to provide some support to the Council to produce a draft Plan as soon as possible with the usual programme management requirements detailing specific timelines and outcomes.

The Leader and Deputy Leader welcomed the approach with support from the Local Government Association incorporating the recommendations from the Jay Report which the other reviews would also feed into.

It was suggested that a specific officer be appointed to oversee the programme management and delivery of the Improvement Plan. Additional expertise may also need to be called upon when required. Hard copies of the respective reviews would also be provided to Board Members.

Resolved:- That actions be taken to prepare and develop the Improvement Plan and for this to be programme managed by a specifically named officer.

(THE CHAIRMAN AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF A TABLED ITEM IN ORDER TO PROGRESS THE MATTERS URGENTLY)

C6 MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATION

Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, introduced the report which asked the Improvement Board to affirm the approach proposed by the Council to secure new management leadership capacity in the Council following the announced departures of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services.

The two options to be considered to source interim cover arrangements were outlined in detail and the involvement of the Local Government Association in this process was welcomed given the urgency for filling

positions.

The Board considered in detail the proposed processes to cover the temporary situation until more formal replacement arrangements could be confirmed. The appointment process going forward was also outlined in more detail.

The Board fully supported Option 1 going forward, but also endorsed the arrangements for Option 2 to be initiated should it prove impossible for Option 1 to be implemented.

Resolved:- That Option 1 be approved going forward involving support from the Local Government Association, but authorisation be given to officers to move to Option 2, should Option 1 not be feasible.

C7 EXPECTED TIMELINE

The Improvement Board had considered the timeline for involvement as part of earlier discussions, but considered these typically were in place for up to twelve months dependent upon progress towards satisfactory implementation of the proposed Improvement Plan.

Resolved:- That an early draft of the Improvement Plan be submitted for consideration and for this to inform the likely duration of the Improvement Board.

C8 DATE, TIME AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The Improvement Board anticipated meeting on a monthly basis and asked that programme of meeting dates be circulated for the next six months for consideration by all Members.

Resolved:- That dates and times for future meetings be circulated as soon as possible.

Recommendations

Immediately

The force should review the management of cases by staff in the dedicated child sexual exploitation teams, and ensure this always complies with statutory child protection guidance.

The force should communicate and explain to the PCC, staff and other interested parties the delay in deploying the ten additional child sexual exploitation officers to the districts.

Failure to fill a vacant post in the Rotherham team that manages sex offenders means that the remaining officers face an unmanageable workload. The force should review the team to ensure that it has sufficient staff to manage sex offenders in line with national guidance.

The force should review the staffing arrangements within the Hi-Tech Crime Unit, to ensure these are sufficient to manage effectively the demands of a thorough and comprehensive child sexual exploitation strategy.

The force should audit its response to child sexual exploitation, to assess whether the changes it is making are having the desired effect (i.e. of improving outcomes for children), and to identify any further work that is required.

Within three months

The force should review its internal communication regarding child sexual exploitation and ensure that clear, consistent messages are passed to all officers and staff. The messages should ensure that everyone knows which chief officer is the lead on tackling child sexual exploitation.

The force should review the tool used to assess the risk of child sexual exploitation to ensure it provides the best possible reflection of the level of risk faced by victims. This could involve additional training for those using the tool, or a change to the scoring mechanism used to calculate the level of risk.

The force should translate the PCC's strategic priorities into operational delivery on the ground.

The force should review the workloads of all staff within public protection units to ensure they have the capacity to manage effectively the cases they are allocated.

Within six months

The force should review its training plan to ensure all staff develop and sustain a good understanding of child sexual exploitation.

The force should review the processes in place to respond to child sexual exploitation in all four districts, with a view to creating greater uniformity, and ensuring all areas attain the high standards achieved in the Sheffield district.

The force should review the operation of its local intelligence units to ensure child sexual exploitation is thoroughly supported by an intelligence approach.

The force should review how it can make better use of research and analysis to support strategies to tackle child sexual exploitation.

The force should review how it monitors the internet for evidence of child sexual exploitation to ensure intelligence opportunities are not being overlooked.

The force and its partners should examine how it can more efficiently manage the handling of child sexual exploitation information and intelligence. In particular, the difficulties in sharing information within the multi-agency teams at Doncaster and Rotherham (because of incompatible information and intelligence IT systems) should be resolved.

Rotherham Council Corporate Improvement Board

7 November 2014

Framework for an Improvement Plan

Introduction

Following the publication of the Alexis Jay report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the town at the end of August 2014 the Leader of the Council put in place an Improvement Board in partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA). The board will provide oversight, support and challenge to the authority's improvement and transformation journey.

At its first meeting, on 26 September 2014, the Board adopted the following terms of reference:

Rotherham Improvement Board – Terms of Reference

The Improvement Board is jointly established by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Local Government Association and will provide oversight, support and challenge to Rotherham's improvement and transformation journey following the publication of the Jay report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and in due course in light of the findings of forthcoming inspections by both DCLG and Ofsted.

The Board aims to support the Council to:-

1. Restore public confidence in the Council.
2. Demonstrate its ambitions for its local communities.
3. Drive forward its plans for improvement in corporate governance and services in a timely way.
1. Prioritise what is most important.
5. Create the capacity and plans to embed lasting improvements and culture change.
1. Deliver improved services within realistic spending constraints.
7. Assist Rotherham to respond to the findings of the forthcoming inspection by Ofsted and the inspection by DCLG.

The Improvement Board's role is to:-

1. Provide support and guidance.
2. Identify and signpost appropriate good practice.
3. Provide challenge and act as a critical friend.
4. Ensure the contributions from different external agencies/bodies to Rotherham's improvement journey are coordinated.
5. Ensure there is a single, integrated and holistic improvement plan that can be clearly understood and communicated internally and externally and to receive regular reports on progress.
6. Advise on decisions which impact on political and managerial leadership arrangements, corporate governance and improvement in advance of those matters being considered by the Council's own decision-making structures, e.g. Cabinet or Council.

Inspections and reviews

Professor Jay's report makes fourteen recommendations to Rotherham Council, and one to the Department for Education. They are set out in Annex A to this report.

It also contains a summary of recommendations from earlier reports collated by the Safeguarding Board.

Following the publication of the report the government has commissioned further inspections and reviews:

- OFSTED have carried out an inspection (Single Inspection Framework) of Early Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers (onsite from 17th September to 8th October – report to be published 19th November 2014)
- OFSTED have carried out a separate thematic inspection of CSE (onsite from 22nd to 26th September – report to be published at the end of November
- Louise Casey, a Director General at the CLG, is leading a Corporate Governance Inspection (onsite during October and November, with a report expected to be with Eric Pickles by 30th November)

Following a letter from the OFSTED Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw to the Secretary of State for Education, a Children's Commissioner, Malcom Newsam, has been appointed to oversee immediate improvements to the Council's delivery of children's services. Mr Newsam's appointment is for three months in the first instance. His terms of reference are attached as Annex B.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has also reported on the SY Police provision for child protection.

Immediate actions by the Council

The council has taken the following actions following the publication of Professor Jay's report, in addition to putting in place the Improvement Board:

- Appointed a new Leader of the Council and a newly constituted cabinet
- Appointed a lead member for Children & Education Services
- Appointed an interim Chief Executive, Ms Jan Ormandroyd, following the resignation of the current Chief Executive
- Initiated a process to appoint an interim Director of Children's Services following the resignation of the previous DCS

The role of the Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan must draw on the findings and recommendations of external reviews and inspections, but must consolidate them into a single statement of the key challenges facing Rotherham Council. The challenges must be fully considered and fully owned by the Council. The Council should not be limited by the focus of external processes in setting out the challenges: some will be evident from its own analyses of the current operating context of Rotherham and of the local government sector as a whole.

The role of the Improvement Board is to provide advice, challenge and support, but responsibility for the plan must lie with the Council itself.

Each challenge will need to form the basis for a simple action plan, which sets out the key elements of response to the challenge, the key responsibilities for delivery, and key milestones and indicators of progress.

Key challenges – preliminary expectations

The Improvement Plan cannot be completed until the outstanding inspections, by OFSTED and Louise Casey, have reported, the Council has been able to reflect on their findings and recommendations, and the interim Chief Executive has been able to make her assessment. We are likely to be in that position until around the turn of the year.

It is possible, however, to set out a preliminary summary of the Council's challenges as currently perceived. It is useful to do so as a basis for focusing immediate actions and ordering discussion, challenge and support from the Improvement Board.

On that basis, a draft list of nine consolidated challenges is proposed.

1. Improvements across the partnership and those specifically within the council for arrangements around Child Sexual Exploitation, ensuring that all 14 local recommendations from the Jay report are quickly acted upon and improvements made. Detailed progress monitoring arrangements currently sit with the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Board and its CSE sub group
2. Wider improvements in children's safeguarding services to ensure that all services for children in need of help and protection are robust and that children are quickly and adequately safeguarded and protected from harm. OFSTED findings and the reports from Malcolm Newsam will form the basis for defining this area of challenge.
3. Rotherham's responses to these challenges will be made in the context of a period of further severe reductions in public spending both nationally and locally. Managing Rotherham's response to this financial context, and ensuring that the Council re-establishes a clear service offer to local residents, constitutes a third challenge

The Council needs to have a clear understanding of its future priorities, their organisational and financial implications, and the changes and improvements it needs to make to the organisation.

This will require the development and delivery of an organisational and service transformational change programme which will best allow Rotherham Council to meet residents future service needs at a time when further savings of £50m are required over the next 3 years (2015/16 to 2017/18), over and above the £93m it has made in the last 4 years

4. Ensure that the Council has the programme management disciplines and culture that is required to deliver its organisational and service transformation programme
5. Ensuring that there are clear and appropriate mutual expectations of both the roles of members and officers in relation to strategic and operational accountability, challenge and governance. Ensuring too that the culture and inter-personal relationships of the organisation are appropriate
6. Ensuring that Rotherham's performance management arrangements are embedded at all levels of the authority and that adequate openness, challenge and robustness is evident in these arrangements
7. Ensuring the most appropriate and effective use of the Overview and Scrutiny functions is in place to secure robust challenge of council decisions and functions of the council
8. Ensuring that a robust system for whistleblowing is in place, that there is a culture of welcoming challenge and responding well to it, and ensuring that staff feel comfortable to use the processes with confidence that their voices will be heard and acted upon

The Jay report recommends that the council take action to review its taxi licensing arrangements, a ninth action is therefore

9. Ensure that a comprehensive review of policies, practice and procedures is undertaken in relation to taxi licensing and that standards are enhanced where appropriate

It is important to recognise that Rotherham as a council cannot move forward alone and the partnerships it has developed over the years with both statutory organisations including health and the police and with its voluntary sector partners and those in the private sector are vital to its improvement journey.

10. The council needs to continue to review clarify and build on its partnership working

It is clear from recent emerging information that Rotherham is not alone with some of its key challenges, particularly in relation to CSE and that many councils and their partners face similar issues and the role of the improvement board and that of the LGA is to learn from the lessons in Rotherham and to

share the improvements with other councils, therefore the final challenge will be:

11. The council needs to share its learning from the improvement journey with other local authorities and partners

Improvement process and public confidence

It is evident that Rotherham Council's recent very public issues have had an impact on the image and reputation of the town, and on the confidence and pride of its residents. It is important that the improvement process is shared with residents and partners so that progress can help re-build confidence, and so that there is realism over what is achieved.

Timeline

It is expected that the Improvement Board will meet on a monthly basis for the immediate future; to review, support and challenge the implementation of the improvement programme.

Assessing progress of the improvements

Rotherham Council will want to demonstrate the improvement process using an appropriate balance of subtlety and objectivity. It will need to provide the Improvement Board with:

- Access to a range of views and reflections from the The Leader, Cabinet members, senior officers, trades unions and other key voices from within the council and from amongst its working partners. This access will be programmed so that the proposed stocktake in xxxx is fully informed
- Quarterly summarised position statements from the Chief Executive and, where appropriate, the other statutory officers
- Objective evidence of the impact of the actions arising from the eleven challenges, indicating progress from a clear set of baselines

Rotherham Improvement Plan – summary of strands of action

Strand	Key actions	Responsibility	Key tests of progress, and key milestones
1. Child Sexual Exploitation practice	•		•
2. Children’s safeguarding operational issues • Funding • Structure • Skills • leadership	•		•
3. The Council’s response to financial challenge and re-establishing a clear offer to local residents	•		•
4. Ensure a programme management culture is in place to deliver service transformation	•		•
5. Clarity of roles in relation to officer / member accountability, challenge and governance	•		•
6. Performance Management embedded at all levels	•		•
7. Ensure the most appropriate use of Overview and Scrutiny functions	•		•
8. Ensure there is a robust system for whistleblowing is in place	•		•
9. Review of policies, practice and procedures in relation to taxi licensing	•		•
10. Partnership working	•		•
11. Share learning and improvements with other local authorities	•		•

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Annex B

Children's Social Care Commissioner's Terms of Reference

1. The Children's Social Care Commissioner's role will be to:
 - a. examine the nature and scale of the problems in respect of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's ('the Council') exercise of their children's social care functions which led to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's letter to the Secretary of State of 30 September 2014, taking into account feedback from the full inspection undertaken by Ofsted;
 - b. ensure the Council takes the immediate steps necessary to stabilise and secure the Council's performance of their children's social care functions;
 - c. ensure that the Council's response to the issues raised by the Commissioner and by Ofsted is of the required standard and proportionate to the scale of the problem(s) and enables the Council as quickly as possible to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area; and
 - d. to review the Council's leadership capability and capacity to drive forward the changes required in order for the Council to provide effective leadership in relation to their children's social care functions.
2. The Commissioner should report to the Secretary of State on his findings, and on the Council's progress with improvement, one month after appointment and three months after appointment.
3. The Commissioner may, at any time, require action of the Council to secure improvement and may recommend further action to the Secretary of State.
4. The appointment will last for three months in the first instance. What happens thereafter will be dependent on the Commissioner's findings, the published Ofsted report into the Council's services for children in need of help and protection and children looked after services and Louise Casey's Review under Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999.
5. The Commissioner should ensure his work benefits from a full understanding of how Louise Casey's Review is proceeding. He should also agree how his work will need to interact with any police investigation into historic criminal acts related to child sexual exploitation that may be undertaken following the publication of the Jay enquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.
6. It is anticipated that the Commissioner will spend an average of two days a week working on these issues, subject to any further agreement between the Commissioner and the Secretary of State.

Recommendations from the Alexis Jay Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation – Annex A

RECOMMENDATION

Risk Assessment

R1. Senior Managers should ensure that there are up-to date risk assessments on all children affected by CSE. These should be of consistently high quality and clearly recorded on the child's file

R2. The numeric scoring tool should be kept under review. Professional judgements about risk should be clearly recorded where these are not adequately captured by the numeric tool.

Looked After Children

R3. Managers should develop a more strategic approach to protecting looked after children who are sexually exploited. This must include the use of out of area placements.

The Borough should work with other authorities to minimise the risks of sexual exploitation to all children, including those living in placements where they may become exposed to CSE.

The strategy should include improved arrangements for supporting children in out of area placements when they require leaving care services

Outreach and Accessibility

R4. The council should make every effort to make help reach out to victims of CSE who are not yet in touch with services. In particular, it should make every effort to restore open access and outreach work with children affected by CSE to the level previously provided by Risky Business

Joint CSE Team

R5. The remit and responsibilities of the joint CSE team should be urgently decided and communicated to all concerned in a way that leaves no room for doubt

R6. Agencies should commit to introducing a single manager for the multi-agency CSE team. This should be implemented as quickly as possible

R7. The council, together with the Police, should review the social care resources available to the CSE team, and make sure these are consistent with the need and demand for services

Collaboration within CYPS

R8. Wider children's social care, the CSE team and integrated youth support services should work better together to ensure that children affected by CSE are well supported and offered an appropriate range of preventative services

RECOMMENDATION

Ongoing work with victims

R9. All services should recognise that once a child is affected by CSE, he or she is likely to require support and therapeutic intervention for an extended period of time.

Children should not be offered short term intervention only, and cases should not be closed prematurely

Post Abuse Support

R10. The Safeguarding Board, through the CSE sub-group, should work with local agencies, including health, to secure the delivery of post abuse support services

Quality Assurance

R11. All agencies should continue to resource and strengthen the quality assurance work currently underway under the auspices of the Safeguarding Board

Minority ethnic communities

R12. There should be more direct and more frequent engagement by the Council and also the Safeguarding Board with women and men from the minority ethnic communities on the issue of CSE and other forms of abuse.

R13. The Safeguarding Board should address the under-reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse in minority ethnic communities

The issue of race

R14. The issue of race should be tackled as an absolute priority if it is a significant factor in the criminal activity of organised child sexual abuse in the Borough

Serious Case Reviews

R15. We recommend to the Department of Education that the guiding principle on redactions in Serious Case Reviews must be that the welfare of any children involved is paramount